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AUTHOR Verry, George P.; Huber, James R.
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ABSTRACT

To examine the unique characteristics of rural social workers from five northeastern Iowa counties, interviewers examined the areas of lifestyle, supervision, flexibility, community resources, generalist casework as opposed to specialized casework, and the influence of gender in rural areas. The 3-phase field study (comprised of approximately 15 interviews with 25 participants) included county directors, social workers groups (3 workers from each county), and individual key workers (identified by the interviewer). Common traits ranked high by county directors were flexibility, supervision, use of community resources, and generalist approach. Interviews with social work groups and key individuals revealed that the majority grew up in rural areas and chose to work there. Emphasis was placed on the need to work with informal networks developed by the social workers, using community members as resources. Peer supervision and flexibility were also held to be important factors. Distance and time taken for travel to reach outside resources were listed as the most negative aspects by workers; however the situation presented by these and other obstacles met in rural areas was listed as a challenge and the major reason social workers chose to remain in rural areas. Three Iowa social worker job descriptions are appended. (AH)

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"THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL SOCIAL WORKERS"-------

A FIVE COUNTY STUDY

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George P. Verry and James R. Huber

N.I.M.H Rural Mental Health Training Grant, The University of Iowa, School of Social Work.

July 20, 1981

Paper presented at the Sixth National Institute on Social Work in Rural Areas, July 26-29, 1981, Beaufort County, South Carolina.

RC013544

INTRODUCTION

For some time, we have been curious about the reasons why social workers choose to work in rural Iowa counties, as opposed to Iowa's more urban and metropolitan counties, where many more resources abound and social workers can carry more specialized caseloads. Is the quality of social workers lesser or greater in rural areas—— or is there little difference in quality between the "city slickers" and their "country cousins"? What characteristics do hiring authorities look for when interviewing prospective social workers for rural county agencies? Is it harder to be a female social worker professional in rural Iowa county agencies?

To begin, one must understand Iowa's Social Service system. Since 1968, all county social welfare agencies were brought into an "umbrella" agency that includes all forms of social service and welfare programs, corrections (institutional, as well as community correctional programs), mental health and mental retardation institutions and state-wide planning (in the most recent session of the Iowa Legislature, community mental health programs and developmental disabilities programs were brought under the "umbrella"), known as the Iowa Department of Social Services. Since that time, county social services employees have been state employees and their qualifications and pay grades have been regulated by the Iowa State Merit Employment Department. Thus, a Social Worker II working in Polk County (250 thousand plus population) receives the same compensation as a Social Worker II working in Ringgold County (population 6,700). ((QUALIFICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS I, II, AND III AS DESCRIBED BY THE IOWA MERIT EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT ARE INCLUDED IN THE APPENDIX OF THIS PAPER.))

For the purposes of answering the afore-mentioned questions, the authors chose five northeastern Iowa counties, ranging in size from 10,500 population to 22,000 persons. The agency's professional staff in the five counties ranged from three social workers to five social workers. The majority of the social workers were women and all of the directors, except two, were men. The counties studied were in three different social services administrative districts. Northeastern Iowa is different in some ways from the rest of the state. The topography is rolling to rugged, tree covered bluffs and hills. the religious population is predominately Roman Catholic in an overwhelmingly Protestant state. The rural people and their county governments tend to be conservative (regardless of political affiliation) and hold traditional values regarding children, marriage, and the status of women. The region tends to be distrustful of outwiders. One gets the feeling that in order to be native to the region, it requires a residency of at least three generations.

The authors developed the survey instrument as an attempt to find answers for some of the questions surrounding: what are the characteristics of social workers in rural communities and what their uniqueness may be. The Department of Social Services was chosen as the survey agency for several reasons. Among those reasons: (1) the agency has local offices in all ninety-nine counties in the state of Iowa; (2) the agency's personnel policies, social worker minimum qualification standards and hiring practices are standardized, and (3) D.S.S. is the core human service agency in Iowa's rural counties. We believe that such a study using this standardized agency allows for more accuracy in our findings, as well as discerning what trends are being established in regard to social work as a profession in a rural area.

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a qualitative approach to gain access to the individual

social workers' perspective in this field study. The advantages of this method are based on the assumption that workers themselves know best what distinctive qualities are needed for rural social work. This research approach allows for the exploration of the characteristics of rural social workers.[1]

The field study uses three sets of interviews: (1) the Director or Supervisor, who identifies what he/she sees as the qualities needed for workers in their agency. (2) The second interviews were with three social workers as a group in each of the five agencies. The group interview centered around basic questions regarding their own needs, qualifications and characteristics that they see as necessary to practice social work in their rural communities. As characteristics were identified, they were noted and probed by the interviewer, gaining additional insights and reasons for valuing the various characteristics. (3) The third set of interviews were with those five social workers, identified by the interviewer, as having a tendency towards being a key worker. These interviews centered around the individual worker's own successful approaches, limitations, and styles of social work.

This study is based on the hypothesis that unique personal and professional characteristics can be identified in the rural social worker.[2] We attempt to recognize if such unique characteristics exist. The information from this study identifies characteristics indicative of a successful social worker for the rural community.

All the interviewees were informed of the nature of this study and their assistance requested, as well as insured confidentiality.

The field study[3] was used as the research mode, with interviews as the primary method for gathering information. The interview method[4] was used to allow for more probing to obtain more complete data. It was possible to establish and maintain rapport with the respondents. Interviewing provided a means of checking with effectiveness of communication. Approximately fifteen

interviews were done with twenty-five participants in the research period. Interviews were semi-structured[5] and built around a structured questionnaire, allowing the interviewer to branch off into areas at more depth. Although accurate information is desired, the semi-structure allowed the opportunity for probing underlying factors and relationships. As the interviewees expressed their ideas, additional feed back was gained, allowing them to discover points of agreement and common experience. This would not have been achieved in individual interviews. The interviewer examined the area of lifestyle, supervision, flexibility, community resources, generalist casework as opposed to specialized casework, and the influence of gender in rural practice. These questions were structured to be general in nature and to facilitate discussion in the group. The third set of interviews were done individually with key workers. This interview took a more in-depth look at individual workers' successful approaches, limitations, styles, and attitude toward rural social work.

COUNTY DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS

The five county directors identified characteristics of social workers which they felt were significant and successful for social work practice in rural areas. The characteristics identified by the directors varied greatly in specific traits as well as terms used for those characteristics. Examples of character traits ranged from loyalty to "guts", from intelligence to life experience and educational degrees. There were a number of traits held in common by the five county directors. Three general catagories which ranked consistently high in interviewing with the county directors were: (1) flexibility, (2) supervision, and (3) the use of community resources. The area which held the strongest priority was the social workers' ability to be flexible. The directors felt that social workers needed to be open to new situa-

tions and to be able to handle many roles in a professional capacity. Being open to people and their needs were foremost in the directors' thinking. The directors felt it was important that the social workers be sensitive to varied and divergent cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Most of them were concerned that the social workers be able to interact with the community people both as professionals and in social capacities. In fact, workers are expected to be able to cope, interacting with clients on a social basis, common to the small towns. A flexible personality was seen as allowing for easier adaptation to the social services system in the community. Flexibility seemed to be the key trait many of the directors linked with the workers being successful in the rural community.

Supervision was another area of concern to the county directors. This was expressed through their identifying assertiveness, creativity, and willingness to take risks. This was seen as a desire by the directors, for the workers to be self-starters, which seems to be essential for the rural community. County directors are often caught in the bind of trying to serve both administrative and supervisory functions in the rural counties. Also identified was the social worker being ingenious in using community resources. The county directors were aware of a lack of resources in their communities.

County directors identified their preference for social workers who could work in a generalist capacity. The directors felt that social workers had to function, at times, as their own supervisor by using their peers. The dual roles of the worker were highlighted by the directors' recognition of the lack of community resources. Because of this lack of resources, social service workers were seen as "the resource" for the majority of human services in the areas. Therefore, social workers needed to fill many roles and functions in order to provide for the needs of their communities.

One director summarized the importance of the social worker generalist

concept stating: "Everyone should work in a rural area. You have to know a little bit about everything in the rural area. You don't have time to concentrate on your paperwork——you have to jump around to keep going. There is just a lot to do."

SOCIAL WORKER GROUP INTERVIEWS

In the second phase of this field study, five groups, each with three social workers were interviewed. From this mode of collecting data, a wide variety of information was revealed. Out of the fifteen workers interviewed, two of these individuals were male. We found five significant catagories in the data gathering process, they being: lifestyle, resources, supervision, generalist practice and flexibility.

The first catagory identified was the social workers' lifestyle as significant to their successful practice in a rural community. Critical to the workers' lifestyle was a need for them to be creative in their own recreational activities in the rural area, as many communities lacked resources for more conventional forms of recreation. The social workers' style of dressing and ways of speaking were also affected. Interest in the community social structure, clubs, organizations, churches, etc. could enhance or subtract from the community's perception of the worker. Social workers responded that they received feedback much more directly from community persons regarding their services and the quality of them. They felt that folks in rural communities were more likely to come up to the worker, in the supermarket or on the street, and share their feelings about social services. Regardless of whether the person was receiving services or not, they're likely to know something about someone who is. Workers are identified by their place of employment and are generally stereotyped through that identification. The stereotype often takes the form of the "welfare worker" or "the child stealers". In agencies where

workers have gotten involved with their communities, it has been harder for community individuals to hold on to their original stereotypes. Community members are more likely to have contact with a particular social worker over a longer period of time, making it harder for them to stereotype the social worker. These personal contacts were seen as forcing people together. They were also seen as challenges by the social workers. Workers are personally held accountable to the community through this type of interaction. This attitude was seen predominately in the social workers who have been in the community, providing services, for more than three years. The belief is that there is a long testing-out period by the community before their stereotypical image of the worker is broken down, and trust and acceptance are gained. Various lifestyles were seen as no problem for the workers. Their consensus from the interviews was that close proximity with the community and length of tenure seemed to lend more understanding and tolerance for lifestyle and deviation from the standard community norms. Some workers did indicate reservations about participating in community social clubs and organizations. This reservation was put in the context of needing time and space to one's self and some distance from the community. Workers were seen as being individualistic, in nature, and having strong personalities in their own right. Even with their individual lifestyles and differences, workers believed they appeared rather stable from the community's perspective. Therefore, they were acceptable in their roles as social workers in the community. Lifestyle seemed much more important on a social basis than on a professional basis. In many cases, workers indicated that their own personal community existed among their peers where they worked.

The majority grew up in rural areas, understanding the rural culture and being comfortable in its ways of interacting. The majority were living in rural areas because of family in the area or because of spouses being employed

in the area. One worker expressed her desire to practice rural social work in terms of being seen working in her county, out of choice, after having grown up there. She realized that the quality of life was high and felt that was her primary reason for being there. Interviewees identified they felt a strong sense of community while working in small towns and rural areas. The majority of those interviewed had a sense of belonging in their communities. They expressed that their working in a rural area suited their lifestyles and they felt more of a sense of freedom for growth as individuals in the rural agencies. This is specified in the variety of duties a worker has, the challenge of being asked to do more, and allowing them to adapt to their own personal style of social work.

The second catagory identified by the social workers dealt with the effective use of resources in rural areas. It was generally believed that social workers must be able to make do with fewer outside agencies as resources in the rural community. There is a lot of travel out of the counties to more urban areas for many of the resources, however. Some workers felt this was beneficial, as they could pick and choose these resources and not be bound to a particular resource within their own communities. Distance was the most negative aspect of using outside resources, with workers and clients having to travel from fifty to one hundred miles one way. Workers felt this travel was inefficient as far as their time and expense.

Workers saw the lack of resources as calling on them to be more creative in their approach to their social work. In addition, a number of workers identified this particular challenge of their creativity as one of the major reasons why they continue to work in the rural area. This lack of resources, however, causes infringement on the social workers' personal time. Clients were seen as having a tendency to believe that "your time is my time". Because of the lack of resources, people have nowhere else to go in times of need.

The rural social workers expressed the need to use informal services or resources in the community, such as: churches, volunteers, family members, and neighbors, in order to meet the needs of their clients. More emphasis was put on the informal networks developed by workers with community members as the resource. However, it was pointed out that the use of this residual welfare system[6] had its limitations. In using the informal networks, resources are quite limited. If one uses a resource for one particular individual, that resource is then depleted and not available for another needy person. It becomes quite apparent, that the residual welfare system is limited in the amount of services it can provide. In addition, workers identify that these sources in the community are not available to all individuals.

One social worker told of a community project to build a home for an elderly woman who is basically estranged from the rest of the community. A great many community resources, such as building material, hardware, man power, etc. have been donated for this project. It has now become apparent that people who have given their time for this project are not willing to donate or generate time and money for additional projects. Therefore, other community members will not receive charities that would benefit them. The realization of the limits of local charity and residual welfare systems should be noted, particularly in this time of our nation's swing toward reliance on the private sector to meet the needs of the less fortunate. The rural community is a microcosm of the national residual welfare system and the same limitations which are apparent to us in the rural community are also applicable to state and national situations. Overall, it would seem that rural workers accept the limitations of resources in their community and can live with the resources they find, coupled with the less formal systems in institutions. The rural worker has a sense of pride in creativity, knowledge of community networks, and overall accepts this challenge in a positive regard.

The area of supervision is often cited as important to the rural social worker. A common theme through all the interviews was reliance on peer supervision. It was reiterated over and over that rural workers must rely on each other in terms of supervision. Workers would consult with each other, informally, regarding case problems and sought suggestions from their fellow workers. In some counties, this process has been included in their formal structure, with workers gathering once a week to share ideas and direction on cases. However, it was recognized that supervision, in the traditional sense of the word, was not often available from administrative levels. Workers have to be self-reliant and dependable in terms of their own judgement. The agency that recognized peer supervision, as a viable form of supervision, was generally described as being a loose system, acting in a consulting capacity with the director included in the process. Peer supervision was seen as providing for a great deal of interaction between staff members serving as a cohesive agent for that rural agency. Much of the supervision was seen as reciprocal between the worker and the director and the director and the worker. In many ways, they could be perceived as different roles, functioning with less of a hierarchy. In three of the interviews workers saw the county director's role as running interference for them with the bureaucracy. Workers felt they knew what they were doing professionally, but needed assistance with bureaucratic necessities from management. It seemed at these times, the local directors were of the most benefit in their supervisory roles. Some workers did indicate a lack of direction and they had to demand supervision from their directors. This underlines the need for workers to be flexible and able to adapt to their conditions. Woerkers indicated some dissatisfaction with what they perceived as a breakdown in communications from the Department's district offices.

Overall, peer supervision was the method primarily identified in the rural agencies. Workers did respond positively about this modality, feeling

it was flexible and produced more growth on their part.

The generalist social worker was clearly the predominate type of caseworker interviewed in this field study. Social workers have more than one type of casework function to perform in these rural counties. Along with casework, workers may be functioning in some administrative duties, public relations, community intervention, as well as interpersonal and social casework levels. Although social workers saw themselves as having specific job titles, with specified duties and responsibilities, they felt they expanded their actual duties beyond their job descriptions. The generalist function was seen as an asset, giving them a broader knowledge of community resources, as well as allowing them to maintain a higher interest level in their work. One worker specifically mentioned that she could not see herself functioning in a more urbanized setting as she would be afraid of being tied into one, specific, repetitious job role.

Flexibility was the fifth area covered in the interviewing process. Workers generally felt they were eased into different cultural backgrounds and beliefs by their frequent and close contact with the people of the community. They have to interact with all people in both a professional and social capacity. The interview process did attempt to look at some of the styles and ways the rural social workers dealt with these situations.

Many of the workers indicated that it is important to have a professional community to interact with. This included school teachers, lawyers, other social workers, and members of the medical community. Many of the individuals grew up in the areas where they are working, continuing to have many lifelong relationships. Interviewees did acknowledge frequent contact with differing attitudes and opinions regarding their clients or their profession that are different from their own. There seems to be two basic ways of dealing with this situation. Workers agreed that they needed to avoid confrontation with

other community members, believing they have the right to their own opinions. Most workers indicated, however, a willingness to talk with persons if they showed an interest. Sometimes, particularly in a social situation, workers felt caught in a no-win situation discussing their opinions with other community citizens.

Interviewees felt they had impact on attitudes of other community members and their feelings regarding clients and other related issues. This was due to the agency's philosophy and the way that philosophy is perceived by the community. In one of the counties, the workers could see a change in community reaction because of the change in the agency's philosophy to a more positive attitude. With this change in the agency's image, in the community, workers felt there was a more positive reflection on people utilizing services with much less stigma. This was an indirect form of workers dealing with contrary attitudes about clients and services. From this position, workers felt that dealing with the community's attitudes and prejudices, that it was their responsibility to reframe and redefine difficulties for these community members, encouraging them to see problems on an individual basis. The worker takes an active role in contacting and talking with community groups, boards, and other significant individuals when the opportunity presents itself for dialogue and clarification of attitudes. Clients were seen as investments and community understanding was often identified as a key to successful interpersonal interaction with clients.

INDIVIDUAL KEY WORKER INTERVIEWS

The key worker interviews were very interesting from both a sense of validation, regarding the group interviews and a more indepth look at how key workers felt about their work and themselves.

Some general comments regarding our key worker interviews center around

their perception of accountability in their profession. The key worker in the agency, where peer supervision was a recognized method of supervising, had strong feelings regarding how the community held him/her, and their fellow workers, accountable for their casework. He/she felt it was because of the high degree of visibility he/she and their peers have within this community, as the reason for the community to hold social workers in his/her area accountable. Interestingly, he/she really liked that system of accountability, and felt he/she received prompt feedback regarding casework skills and case accomplishments. They also commented that they thought this type of accountability in the rural areas was a means for the local community to exercise more local control over the agency.

Since most of the workers in the group interviews were women, the authors questioned the position of the female social worker in a rural community. Generally, the women in the group interviews were less specific regarding any problems they may have due to their gender. When female key workers were interviewed, they were more explicit regarding problems they have or have had because of their sex.

Let's consider one of the key worker interviews. We'll name this worker, Sarah. Sarah is twenty-nine years old, formerly married for five years, and a single parent of a four year old son. Sarah has returned to her native county after being away for twelve years. During those twelve years, Sarah earned both a B.S.W. and M.S.W. degree from the State University, and practiced for three years in a major midwestern metropolitan area and for two years in another metropolitan area. After Sarah's marriage ended in divorce, she decided to return to her hometown where her parents and other extended family members live. Sarah was particularly anxious for her son to experience the quality of life in her home town as well as being close to her parents. Sarah's

parents have really helped with the care of her son. Since Sarah is a child protection services worker, she needs someone responsible day or night to provide child care.

With this type of support in mind, the questioner probed further, asking Sarah what her life was like living and working in this small town. Sarah felt that there were not too many problems for her professionally but she thought her life was difficult socially. Sarah thought a number of persons, including some of her peers in her office, viewed her as a "grass widow".

In northwestern Iowa, "grass widow" is an idiomatic expression used to connote a divorced woman. This is interesting in its own right—— as a divorced man is not a "grass widower". Sarah says that it is sometimes difficult to seek emotional and social support from men in her community because of the threat a "grass widow" has on men. Apparently, such women are perceived as being after men, taking anyone they can. Sarah feels this uniqueness will wear off, the longer she remains in her community. Since she has been on the job for less than two years, it will take awhile for the community to readjust their perception of her. It is important to point out that Sarah is a strong, individualistic person. She represents a new view regarding the position of women in her community.

CONCLUSION

We found our researching of the unique characteristics of social workers in rural areas both fascinating and educational. We did not, however, compare rural social workers with those in urban communities. The Iowa Des Moines Register (Sunday, July 12, 1981 edition) states that there are no metropolitan cities in Iowa. The proof they offer is simply the fact that one can observe grass growing between the sidewalk cracks in both downtown Des Moines and Cedar Rapids.

We did find that the social workers we interviewed were flexible and generally of very high quality. Almost to a person they were practicing in their communities because they wanted to be there. Their lifestyles appeared not to pose any real problems. One cannot be sure, however, whether the social workers' lifestyles were, or were not, already compatible with the community prior to their employment.

We did find an overwhelming preference by the social workers we interviewed to be generalists as opposed to specialized caseworkers. This contention is supported by the literature regarding rural social work.

The most common form of social worker supervision was that supervison by their peers. In two of the counties, this method was acknowledged as reciprocal between workers and director and director and workers. This mode of supervision seems to be as important key to the success of some of the agencies we surveyed.

Lastly, we found it was difficult for the women we interviewed to factor out discrimination in their professions because of their sex. We offer the premise that these social worker professionals are really so immeshed in their communities they do not feel or choose to ignore most discriminatory problems. It was obvious to us, however, that there was some discrimination toward women by the bureaucracy, as well as some incidents of discrimination within their communities and the agencies where they worked.

We submit the preceding information with the hope that it may help collate some thoughts regarding social workers by those persons responsible for their hiring, as well as those academicians responsible for educating them.

NOTES

[1]Howard Schuartz and Jerry Jacobs, Qualitative Sociology; (New York: Free Press, copyright 1979): pp. 3-17.

[2]Southern Regional Education Board Manpower Education and Training Project Rural Task Force, "Educational Assumptions For Rural Social Work" in Social Work in Rural Communities, Leon H. Ginsberg, Ed. (Council on Social Work Education: New York, 1976): pp. 41-44.

[3]Stephen Isaac in collaboration with William B. Michael, Handbook in Research and Evaluation; (San Diego, California: EDITS Publishers, copyright 1972): pp. 20.

[4]Howard Schwartz and Jerry Jacobs, Qualitative Sociology; (New York: Free Press, copyright 1979): pp. 37-60. Stephen Isaac in collaboration with William B. Michael, Handbook in Research and Evaluation; (San Diego, California: EDITS Publishers, copyright 1972): pp. 96-99.

[5]Stephen Isaac in collaboration with William B. Michael, Handbook in Research and Evaluation; (San Diego, California: EDITS Publishers, copyright 1972): pp. 96-99.

[6]Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, Industrial Society and Social Welfare; (New York: Free Press, copyright 1965): pp. 138-140 and p. 144.

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IOWA MERIT EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

Class Code: 03012

SOCIAL WORKER I

RECEIVED
NOV 1980
DELAWARE CO. DEPT. OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

SALARY: Pay Grade 20

EXAMINATION: Written

DEFINITION

Under immediate supervision, as training and experience are gained, performs social work within specific guidelines in a county, district office or institution; performs related work as required.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

Applies casework principles to field case work situations, giving assistance to various clientele groups.

Assumes a partial caseload of pre-selected cases as training and experience increase.

Takes a position on an institutional interdisciplinary treatment team; observing, learning, and applying to some patients or families, limited institutional casework and group services.

Performs outreach activities gathering and learning how to evaluate, information necessary to development an assistance or treatment program.

Fills out all necessary forms and papers, learning their purpose and function.

KNOWLEDGES, ABILITIES, SKILLS, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Knowledge of human growth and behavior.

Knowledge of interviewing skills and techniques.

Knowledge of the basic environmental and cultural factors inherent in social work.

Ability to deal effectively with clients, staff and related community organizations.

Ability to correctly interpret and apply rules, regulations, policies, and procedures governing a social welfare program.

Ability to prepare case records and progress reports.

Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from an accredited four year college or university;

OR

four years of full-time equivalent technical work experience involving direct contact with people in overcoming their social, economic, psychological, or health problems;

OR

an equivalent combination of qualifying experience and education substituting one year of qualifyng experience for each thirty semester hours of education.

Selective Certification

For certain designated positions the Appointing Authority, with Merit Employment Department approval, may selectively request those applicants who possess the following:

863 ability to speak Spanish fluently

Applicants desiring to be considered for these positions should be sure to note the applicable skills on the application.

Adopted: 7/1/69

Revised: 9/15/80 PW

IOWA MERIT EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

Class Code: 03013

SOCIAL WORKER 2

RECEIVED
NOV 1980
DELAWARE CO. DEPT. OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

SALARY: Pay Grade 22

EXAMINATION: Written

DEFINITION

Under direct to general supervision, performs professional social work within guidelines in a county, district office or institution; performs related work as required.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

Provides basic social work services in programs offered by the Department of Social Services; carries a full caseload.

Provides basic social work services and placement services for dependent, neglected and delinquent children who have been committed to institutions, in facilitating their reintegration into the community.

Serves as a member of an institutional interdisciplinary treatment team; providing casework and group work services.

Performs outreach activities gathering and evaluating information regarding clients or programs, developing an assistance or treatment program, and coordinating activities with relevant community agencies, as directed.

Gives guidance to subordinate classes of employees as directed.

Completes or directs the preparation of necessary records and reports.

KNOWLEDGES, ABILITIES, SKILLS, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Knowledge of the basic environmental and cultural factors inherent in social work.

Knowledge of the principles of human growth and behavior.

Knowledge of interviewing skills and techniques.

Knowledge of community resources.

Knowledge of home-finding and placement methods and practices.

Knowledge of current literature and trends in social casework.

Ability to correctly interpret and apply rules, regulations, policies, and procedures governing a social welfare program.

Ability to deal effectively with clients, staff and related community organizations.

Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing.

Ability to prepare case records and progress reports.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from an accredited four year college or university with a Bachelor's degree in social work;

OR

graduation from an accredited four year college or university and the equivalent of one year of full time experience in a social work capacity;

OR

an equivalent combination of qualifying experience and education substituting one year of qualifying experience for each thirty semester hours of education;

OR

graduate education in a Masters of Social Work program from an accredited college or university may be substituted for the required experience on the basis of thirty semester hours for the one year of required experience;

OR

the equivalent of one year of full time experience as a Social Worker 1 in the state classified service.

Selective Certification

For certain designated positions the Appointing Authority, with Merit Employment Department approval, may selectively request those applicants who possess the following:

863 ability to speak Spanish fluently

Applicants desiring to be considered for these positions should be sure to note the applicable skills on the application.

At the time of interview, applicants referred to Glenwood and Woodward State Hospital-Schools will be assessed to determine if they meet federal government employment requirements as published in the Federal Register, Volume 39, No. 12, Thursday, January 17, 1974, Section 20-CFR-405.1101.

Agency of Employment: Department of Social Services.

Location of Employment: All 99 counties.

Adopted: 7-1-69

Revised: 9-15-80 PW

I O W A

SOCIAL WORKER III

RECEIVED
AUG 2 3 1978
DELAWARE CO. DEPT. OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, performs intensive social work services or some limited supervisory duties in a county, district office, institution, or the central office; performs related work as required.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

Provides intensive casework services for clients with difficult, complex, and complicated problems, requiring a reduced caseload on a full-time basis.

Deals with individuals and groups having sociopathic personalities, impulsive behavior that may be self-destructive or depredatory, and others with chronically defective behaviors.

Makes professional decisions and recommendations that can have a serious impact on the life of the person served.

Provides or directs the preparation of necessary records and reports.

Gives advice and consultation when unusual, difficult, or complex cases are encountered.

May perform some, but less than the full range of supervisory functions required for collective bargaining exemption purposes.

KNOWLEDGES, ABILITIES, AND SKILLS

Considerable knowledge of casework methods, techniques, and their application to work problems.

Considerable knowledge of the principles of human growth and behavior, basic sociological and psychological treatment and therapy practices.

Considerable knowledge of interviewing skills and techniques.

Considerable knowledge of group work methods, and basic community organization techniques.

Knowledge of the environmental and cultural factors inherent in social work.

Knowledge of federal, state, and local legislation relative to public assistance and welfare programs.

Knowledge of federal and state rules, policies, and procedures as they relate to the sector of responsibility.

Ability to deal courteously and tactfully with other public and private agencies.

Ability to use interviewing skills and techniques effectively.

Ability to plan, instruct, and guide others in social work services.

Ability to interpret rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Ability to write and speak effectively.

OPTED: 7/1/69 REVISED: 10/12/77 CLASS CODE: 03016

SOCIAL WORKER III (Continued)

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Minimum. Graduation from an accredited four (4) year college and three (3) years of full-time paid employment in a social work capacity in a public or private agency;

OR

a Bachelor's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education from an accredited four (4) year college or university and two (2) years of full-time paid employment in a social work capacity in a public or private agency;

OR

a Master's degree in social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education from an accredited college or university;

OR

any equivalent combination of graduate education in the social or behavioral sciences from an accredited college or university and qualifying experience up to a maximum of thirty (30) semester hours for one (1) year of the required experience.

FOR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

Twelve (12) months of experience as a Social Worker II shall be considered as qualifying.

NOTE: At the time of interview, applicants referred to Glenwood and Woodward State Hospital-Schools will be assessed to determine if they meet federal government employment requirements as published in the Federal Register, Volume 39, No. 12, Thursday, January 17, 1970, Section 20-CFR-405.1101.